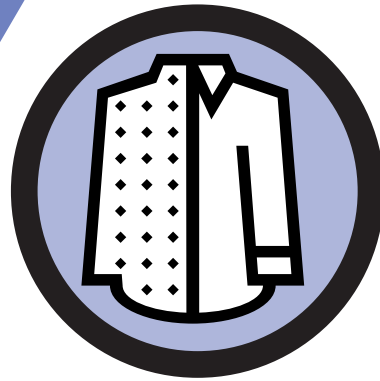




Australian
Competition &
Consumer
Commission



Care labelling – clothing & textile products

The *Trade Practices Act 1974* allows for the prescribing of consumer product information standards. These standards require that particular information about a product be disclosed so customers will be better informed and can make better choices.

A consumer product information standard exists for care labelling of clothing and textile products. The requirements allow:

- consumers to be aware of the method and cost of caring for goods when they purchase them;

- consumers, drycleaners and launderers to select the correct care treatments;
- the useful life of articles to be prolonged; and
- products not to be damaged by improper care.

Compliance with information standards is mandatory. All suppliers — including manufacturers, importers, wholesalers/distributors and retailers — must ensure their products comply with the care labelling requirements.



The consumer product information standard (mandatory standard)

The mandatory standard for the care labelling of clothing and textile products is based on Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1957:1998, *Textiles — Care labelling*, published by Standards Australia.

Suppliers should be aware that the mandatory standard based on AS 1957-1987 ceased to have effect on 1 January 2000. As of this date all suppliers must ensure their products comply with the revised requirements.

To aid compliance, suppliers are advised to read the mandatory standard notice (included in this guide) in conjunction with AS/NZS 1957:1998, which is available for purchase from Standards Australia on free call 1300 65 46 46 or from its website:
<http://www.standards.com.au>

Suppliers' responsibility

This guide provides an overview of the mandatory requirements for the care labelling of clothing and textile products. It aims to increase supplier understanding of the coverage and application of the mandatory standard.

The guide is of a general nature and there may be important qualifications or exceptions to the mandatory standard that it does not cover. Therefore suppliers should always seek professional advice to ensure their product

complies with the mandatory requirements.

Suppliers are responsible for ensuring their clothing and textile products meet the information standard.

Coverage of the mandatory standard

Products covered by the mandatory requirements include:

- Clothing
- Household textiles
- Apparel
- Furnishings
- Upholstered furniture
- Bedding
- Mattresses
- Bed bases
- Piece goods and yarns made from textiles
- Plastics
- Plastic coated fabrics
- Suede skins, hides, grain leathers and/or furs.

Exemptions

The information standard provides a detailed list of the types of goods exempt from the care labelling requirements.

Suppliers are advised to consult the mandatory standard notice to determine if their products are exempt. If not, then compliance with the care labelling requirements is mandatory.



Requirements of the mandatory standard

In general, the mandatory standard requires that care instructions be:

- permanently attached to articles;
- written in English;
- legible (it should be noted that previous height requirements on lettering no longer apply);
- appropriate and adequate for the care of the article so that when followed the article is not damaged; and
- accessible to the consumer at point of sale.

Where care instructions are not accessible at the point of sale because of packaging, folding or display, additional labelling is required. The same care instructions that appear on the article must be provided in one of the following ways:

- on the outer packaging;
- on a removable label or ticket attached to the article; or
- as a pamphlet accompanying the article.

Non-permanent labelling

Certain made-up articles, including reversible garments, may have non-permanent labels. These articles are listed in clause 2.5 of the mandatory standard notice.

Where the care instructions are provided on a non-permanent label, the label must be applied to the article using one of the additional labelling methods:

- on the outer packaging;
- on a removable label or ticket attached to the article; or
- as a pamphlet accompanying the article.

Care instructions for fabric, yarns and other materials are to be provided:

- on a label or ticket attached to the roll of fabric;
- by printing or weaving instructions on the selvedge; or
- on a label on a sample book or swatches of the goods.

Content of label

Manufacturers and importers have a responsibility to ensure the care labelling is correct for each article. Advice on this may be sought from textile consultants. Manufacturers and importers may also refer to AS/NZS 2621:1998 *Textiles — Guide to the selection of correct care labelling instructions from AS/NZS 1957* for additional guidance.

The care instructions are to be adequate and appropriate for the article. Overly cautious instructions such as 'dry-clean only' on a garment that can be safely washed contravene the mandatory information standard.



Adequate care instructions generally must include information on the following:

- general care and warnings;
- washing;
- drying*;
- ironing*;
- and
- dry-cleaning.

Where an article may be laundered or dry-cleaned or both, care instructions for both treatments must appear on the same side of the label.

Care instructions may include both specific and prohibited instructions. Specific care instructions are ones such as 'Dry flat', 'Cool iron', 'Dry-clean only', while prohibited instructions advise of activities not to be undertaken such as 'Do not iron' or 'Do not tumble dry'.

Articles that can be neither laundered nor dry-cleaned must bear a label indicating that fact and must adequately describe the care treatment.

Delicate or vulnerable components of articles such as trims or padding in furniture or bedding, must be considered in the care instructions where removal is not advised or they cannot be removed.

* If there are no specific or prohibited drying or ironing instructions necessary for the care of an article then no instructions for these activities need appear on the label.

Where an article consists of different materials the care instructions must be suitable for all materials including the most sensitive.

Multiple pieces

Care instructions must be applied to each separate or detachable piece or component of an article, set or group regardless that the same care requirements apply to each piece.

For example care instructions must appear on:

- the pants, skirt, and jacket of a suit;
- the chairs and sofas in a lounge suite (and individual cushions, if they can be removed from a chair, sofa or suite); or
- each napkin and the tablecloth in a napery set.

If a piece or component requires different care to the others it must be labelled accordingly.

Care instructions

Tables 1, 2 and 3 of AS/NZS 1957:1998 contain instructions to be used on the care label. Each table contains care instructions specific to a particular article classification.

Table 1. Made-up articles, apparel, household textiles, piece goods and yarns.

Table 2. Upholstered furniture (including leather), bedding and other furnishings.



Table 3. Leather and fur apparel (including sheep skin).

Made-up articles, apparel, and household textiles may also use the care instructions listed in table 3.

It is important that suppliers understand into which classification their goods fall so they can select the correct instructions. Section 3 of AS/NZS 1957:1998 provides guidance for determining the correct classification.

Unless otherwise stated, suitable care instructions must be selected from each of the categories in the appropriate table. Words that have a similar meaning to the care instructions listed in tables 1, 2 and 3 may be used instead of the instructions in the tables.

The use of the symbol denoting 'Do not dry-clean', that is the circle with the cross through it, is optional.

The ACCC's role

The ACCC is responsible for enforcing mandatory consumer product safety and information standards.

The ACCC also investigates allegations by consumers and suppliers about non-complying goods.

The ACCC frequently seeks immediate withdrawal of defective goods from sale and recall of the goods. Other remedies available to the ACCC include injunctions,

damages, a requirement for corrective advertising and various ancillary orders.

Penalties

Supplying goods that do not comply with a mandatory standard is an offence under the Trade Practices Act and may result in fines of up to \$200 000 for corporations and \$40 000 for individuals.

Other legislation

A State and Territory may have its own product information standards. For information about State and Territory laws suppliers should contact the relevant consumer affairs or fair trading agency.

ACCC website

Information on product safety and standards is available on the ACCC website: <http://www.accc.gov.au>. The site is regularly updated with news on mandatory standards, bans and recalls. Product safety media releases and links to other useful websites are also available.



Industry, Science and Tourism

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Trade Practices Act 1974 - sub-section 65E (1)

CONSUMER PRODUCT INFORMATION STANDARD

Consumer Protection Notice No. 3 of 1998

CARE LABELLING FOR CLOTHING AND TEXTILE PRODUCTS

I, WARREN ERROL TRUSS, Minister for Customs and Consumer Affairs,
pursuant to section 65E (1) of the Trade Practices Act 1974, hereby:

- a) REVOKE the consumer product information standards in respect of care labelling requirements published in Gazette No. GN 36, of 20 September 1989 and
- b) DECLARE that:
 - I. In respect of the goods specified in Division I of the Schedule to this Notice, the standards approved by the Standards Association of Australia specified in Division 2 of the Schedule as amended by the variations specified in Division 3 of the Schedule, are consumer product information standards for the purposes of section 65D of the Trade Practices Act 1974;
 - II. The standard first mentioned in Division 2 of the Schedule to this Notice, Australian Standard AS 1957-1987 and amendments to that standard in Division 3 of the Schedule to this Notice, shall cease to have effect from 1 January 2000;
 - III. Where more than one standard is specified for a particular class of goods, the goods need only comply with one of the standards specified; and
 - IV. This consumer product information standard will cease to have effect on 1 January 2004.

THE SCHEDULE

Division I: Particulars of Goods:

Clothing, household textiles, apparel, furnishings, upholstered furniture, bedding, mattresses, bed bases, piece goods and yarns made from textiles, plastics, plastic coated fabrics, suede, skins, hides, grain leathers and/or furs but not including goods specified below.



Goods exempt from Care Labelling Requirements

Second hand goods: All second hand goods are exempt.

Men's, Women's, Children's and Infant's Wear: Unsupported coats (including overcoats, jackets and the like) of PVC film, handkerchiefs, braces, garter suspenders, arm bands, belts, headwear.

Footwear: All footwear other than all types of hosiery, textile materials used in the manufacture of footwear.

Drapery: Floor cloths, dish cloths, dusters, cleaning cloths, pressing cloths.

Haberdashery: Ornaments, artificial flowers, sewing and embroidery threads and all other small items of haberdashery used in the making of clothing and textile products where instructions are not needed to ensure that the clothing or textile product is not damaged during cleaning and maintenance.

Furnishings: Oil baize, window blinds, shade blinds, sun blinds, awnings, floor coverings, light fittings, lampshades, tapestries, wall hangings, ornaments, handicraft items, draught excluders, non-upholstered furniture, cushions and cushion covers manufactured from remnants and labelled by the manufacturer with the following disclaimer "cushion cover manufactured from remnant/s, care treatment unknown".

Jute Products: All jute products.

Medical and Surgical Goods: All goods intended for medical and surgical use as bandages, dressings, sanitary pads or materials forming part of manufactured medical and surgical goods.

Canvas Goods: Beach and garden umbrella coverings.

Miscellaneous Goods: Cords, twines, lashings, garden hose, toys, umbrellas and parasols, shoelaces, woven labels, flex coverings, goods manufactured for sporting purposes (including sporting gloves but excluding all other apparel), articles intended for one use only, mops, basket hangers, shoe holders, remnants, industrial gloves, polypropylene webbing furniture, all bags and cases (including handbags, purses, wallets, travel bags, school bags, sports bags, briefcases and wash bags).



Division 2: The Standard

Either

1. Australian Standard AS 1957 - 1987, *Care labelling of clothing, household textiles, furnishings, upholstered furniture, bedding, piece goods and yarns*, published on 2 November 1987.

or

2. Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1957:1998 *Textiles - Care labelling*, published on 5 January 1998.

Division 3: Variations:

Australian Standard AS 1957 - 1987, specified in Division 2 is varied by adding:

- (A) to clause 1 of the standard after the word bedding, the words “mattresses, bed bases”
- (B) the following clause after clause 5.2.3 of AS 1957 - 1987:

“Made up goods of a kind specified below are exempt from the requirement that a permanent label shall be attached to the goods. However where a permanent label is not provided for such goods, care instructions shall be provided on a removable ticket or label attached to the goods, on a pamphlet accompanying the goods or as printed instructions on the wrapper or other matter in which the goods are packaged.

Made-up goods for which care instructions may be provided in a form other than by a permanent label:

Men’s and Boy’s Wear: Collars, gloves, mittens, all types of hosiery, incontinence garments, reversible jackets, fur garments.

Women’s and Children’s Wear: Collars, neckwear, gloves, mittens, all types of hosiery, incontinence garments, reversible jackets, fur garments, shawls.

Baby Wear: Gloves, mittens, bibs, washable nappies, squares of flannelette, terry towelling or muslin, baby pilchers, fur garments.

Drapery: Face washers, serviettes, doilies, table cloths, tray cloths, centres, runners, duchess sets, mosquito netting and covers made therefrom, butter muslin and gauze, tea towels, place mats, pot holders, finger tips, appliance covers for teapots, toasters or the like.

Haberdashery: Elastic, elastic threads, ribbons, zips, iron-on binding patches or trim, velcro type fasteners, curtain making kits.

Piece goods: Trim.

Furnishings: Shower curtains.

Miscellaneous: Gardening gloves.”



Commonwealth of Australia Gazette
No. GN 28, 15 July 1998

Government departments 2503

Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1957:1998, specified in Division 2 is varied by:

- (A) Deleting clauses 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4.
- (B) Deleting clause 2.1.3 and replacing it with:

“2.1.3 Care instructions for articles unable to be washed or drycleaned: Where an article is unable to be washed or drycleaned, the permanent label shall include appropriate instructions in words:

- (a) which warn that the article is unable to be washed or drycleaned; and
- (b) which adequately describe the care treatment.”

- (C) Deleting clause 2.2(b).
- (D) Deleting clause 2.2(c) and replacing it with the following clause:
- “(c) The wording of the label shall be in English and be clearly legible.”
- (E) Delete note 1 to clause 2.2.
- (F) Add the following words to note 5 after clause 2.2:

“This includes individual pieces of household textile products sold as sets, eg napkin and tablecloth sets.”

- (G) Adding the following clauses after clause 2.3:

“2.4 Where in this standard there is a requirement for care instructions from categories in Tables 1, 2 or 3 to be provided on or with articles, words that have a similar meaning to the care instructions listed in Tables 1, 2 or 3 may be used.

2.5 Made up goods of a kind specified below are exempt from the requirement that a permanent label shall be attached to the goods. However where a permanent label is not provided for such goods, care instructions shall be provided on a removable ticket or label attached to the goods, on a pamphlet accompanying the goods or as printed instructions on the wrapper or other matter in which the goods are packaged.”

Made-up goods for which care instructions may be provided in a form other than by a permanent label:

Adult’s, children’s and infant’s wear: Collars, neckwear, bow ties, gloves, mittens, all types of hosiery, incontinence garments, reversible garments, fur garments, bibs, washable nappies, squares of flannelette, terry towelling or muslin, baby pilchers.



2504 Government departments

Commonwealth of Australia Gazette
No. GN 28, 15 July 1998

Drapery: Face washers, serviettes, doilies, table cloths, tray cloths, centres, runners, duchess sets, mosquito netting and covers made therefrom, butter muslin and gauze, tea towels, place mats, pot holders, finger tips, appliance covers for teapots, toasters or the like, hot water bottle covers.

Haberdashery: Elastic, elastic threads, ribbons, zips, iron-on binding patches or trim, velcro type fasteners, curtain making kits and all other small items of haberdashery used in the making of clothing and textile products where instructions are needed to ensure that the clothing or textile product is not damaged during cleaning and maintenance.

Furnishings: Shower curtains.

Miscellaneous: Gardening gloves.”

(H) Delete the words “each of” from the first sentence of clause 3.4.

(I) Delete the words “each of” from the first sentence of clause 3.5.

(J) Delete the words “each category” from the second sentence of clause 3.6 and replace with the words “the categories”.

(K) Delete the third sentence of clause 3.6

Dated this

third

day of

July

1998,

WARREN ERROL TRUSS

9609474



Mandatory standards and bans under the Trade Practices Act as at January 2000

Mandatory standards

- Balloon-blowing kits
- Bean bags
- Bicycles
- Bicycle helmets
- Child restraints for motor vehicles
- Children's nightwear — flammability
- Clothing and textile products — care labelling
- Cosmetics and toiletries
- Cots for household use
- Disposable cigarette lighters
- Elastic luggage straps
- Exercise cycles
- Fire extinguishers (portable)
- Flotation toys and swimming aids for children
- Jacks, including trolley jacks
- Motorcycle helmets
- Paper patterns for children's nightwear
- Ramps for motor vehicles
- Sunglasses and fashion spectacles
- Support stands for motor vehicles
- Tobacco products
- Toys for children under 3

Permanent bans

- 'Diveman' underwater breathing apparatus
- Gas masks which contain asbestos
- Glucomannan in tablet form
- 'Quickie' line release system
- Seat belt accessories, including 'Klunk Klip', 'Comfix', 'Auto Comfort'
- Sun visors including 'Autotrend Sun Filter' and similar internal visors
- Tobacco products (smokeless)
- Victim toys

Interim bans

- Candles with lead wicks

Further details on the mandatory standards and bans can be obtained from ACCC offices.

ACCC website

Updates on product safety and standards can be obtained from the ACCC website:
<http://www.accc.gov.au>



ACCC contacts

ACT (National Office)

Tel: (02) 6243 1111
Fax: (02) 6243 1199

Tasmania

Tel: (03) 6234 5155
Fax: (03) 6234 7796

New South Wales

Tel: (02) 9230 9133
Fax: (02) 9223 1092

Victoria

Tel: (03) 9290 1800
Fax: (03) 9663 3699

Tamworth

Tel: (02) 6761 2000
Fax: (02) 6761 2445

Western Australia

Tel: (08) 9325 3622
Fax: (08) 9325 5976

Queensland

Tel: (07) 3835 4666
Fax: (07) 3832 0372

Northern Territory

Tel: (08) 8943 1499
Fax: (08) 8943 1490

Townsville

Tel: (07) 4771 2712
Fax: (07) 4721 1538

South Australia

Tel: (08) 8205 4242
Fax: (08) 8410 4155